

the cost of living higher by blocking new energy production, keeping taxes high and fighting the things that will actually lower the cost of living such as lowering the cost of gasoline and lowering the cost of health care.

The Family Prospect Act includes the first increase in the minimum wage in almost 10 years. It includes a reduction in the death tax so small family farms and businesses will not have to be sold. It includes tax credits for college tuition, welfare to work, and many other things we know will create jobs. It is truly the Family Prosperity Act.

I call on my colleagues to stop obstructing what we are trying to do. We believe we can raise the income of every American and that we can lower the cost of living if we just work together.

I hope all of our colleagues, Republican and Democrat, will see the individual family in America is much more important as far as their income than the Government. By passing this bill, at least moving on to debate at the end of this week, we will have done a lot to reassure Americans that we do care about lowering the cost of living so they can live more prosperous lives.

GULF OF MEXICO ENERGY BILL

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to comment on S. 3711, the Gulf of Mexico energy bill. I believe this legislation strikes an appropriate balance between our need for new sources of oil and natural gas, with the concerns of the coastal States.

I do support passage of S. 3711, but I do not support the bill passed by the House of Representatives earlier this year. The careful compromise that is the Senate bill cannot be found in the version passed by the House. I will not support any legislation that opens South Carolina's coast to drilling for oil.

I am supporting the Senate bill, but I wish that it went further to address our energy dependency issues. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, the world's demand for energy is expected to double in the coming years. This should be a call to intensify our efforts to become energy independent as soon as possible. We must continue to fund research into alternative sources of energy such as hydrogen. Where suitable we need to use solar power and potentially wind. We must expand production of ethanol beyond corn so that all regions of the country can produce ethanol efficiently.

As a cochair of the Senate Manufacturing Caucus, I voted for this legislation to increase our supply of natural gas for manufacturers. According to a study by the Congressional Research Service, 24 percent of our natural gas is consumed to generate electricity. While it is very easy to generate electricity from gas, it is a very inefficient

use of the resource. Instead of electricity generation, natural gas should be utilized for industrial and home heating use.

For electricity generation, we need to continue encourage a renaissance in nuclear power. This involves reducing the regulatory redtape involved in constructing new plants, opening Yucca Mountain, and proceeding with spent nuclear fuel recycling. Nuclear power is an efficient zero-emission source of energy that can address both our energy and climate concerns.

I applaud the ongoing work of Senator DOMENICI and others to help increase the supply of critical energy resources. This bill is a small step in the right direction, and I look forward to working to further this effort beyond what we are accomplishing today. I also encourage my colleagues in the House that if they are truly serious about passing a bill to increase the supply of natural gas and oil this year, S. 3711 needs to be passed by the House as soon as possible.

STRENGTHENING CFIUS

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for this Chamber's efforts to strengthen our CFIUS process—a system of screening foreign investment to make sure our national security is not compromised. In light of recent concerns about investments that did not receive adequate scrutiny, I think is imperative that we review this process and improve upon it where needed. It is important, however, that we do not modify the process in such a way that we create a system that unnecessarily discourages companies from investing in the United States. In order for our country to maintain our competitive advantage, we must make sure that we continue to be the worldwide choice of location for businesses. Although we have passed legislation out of the Senate intended to strengthen CFIUS, this legislation did not have the benefit of floor debate. I encourage the chairman of the Banking Committee, Senator SHELBY, to continue to solicit the views of the Members of this Chamber and address concerns that may be raised about the impact on direct investment before we begin to conference with the House on the measure.

WHITE PINE COUNTY CONSERVATION, RECREATION, AND DEVELOPMENT ACT

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, yesterday my colleague from Nevada, Senator REID, and I introduced the White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2006. This bill is the product of bipartisan cooperation and it represents a fair compromise on a number of issues relating to the protection of White Pine County's natural resources. While not perfect, this measure strikes an appropriate balance between economic devel-

opment, privatizing Federal lands, and designating wilderness areas. On whole, the White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2006 is a good piece of legislation and it should be passed.

White Pine County, NV, with fewer than 10,000 residents, is in rural eastern Nevada. The county has seen more prosperous times. The closure of mines has been hard on the local economy. Additionally, the Federal Government manages a high percentage of land which makes it difficult to foster growth. The bill seeks modest changes to the land ownership pattern to allow White Pine County to grow and increase its tax base, and gives residents some modest tools they need to prosper. We have also provided the same tools to the Ely Shoshone Tribe. We accomplish these goals through land disposal, natural resource and wildlife conservation, tourism development, additional protection for the wondrous Great Basin National Park, recreation opportunities, Nevada State Parks expansions, wilderness designation, and a study to determine if off highway vehicles should have a designated route through the county.

The White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2006 is modeled on an innovative law that I coauthored as a member of the House of Representatives with former Senator Richard Bryan. That measure, the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998, SNPLMA, is widely regarded as a huge success. Two successor laws I wrote with Senator REID and Congressman GIBBONS, the Clark County Protection of Lands and Natural Resources Act of 2002 and the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004 followed SNPLMA.

These county bills for Nevada can and should be replicated in every county in Nevada. Many other Western States with large public land holdings may benefit from our Nevada model. The premise is simple: not all land is suitable for public ownership, and other public lands are suitable for increased protection. We settle longstanding wilderness issues by designating permanent wilderness areas and release wilderness study areas to multiple use. Years of disagreements between developers, multiple use advocates, governments, environmentalists, conservationists, and other stakeholders are settled by these land bills. Bringing together people from diverse interests has actually proved to be a very healthy exercise in Nevada; it has fostered a spirit of cooperation that will benefit generations of Nevadans to come.

The White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2006 also proposes significant amendments to the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998. In some instances, we revise provisions in current law that need improvement. We add new expenditure categories for